

## A Death Satisfied

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This story was written in response to MPhage's story Death Comes to Gotham. If you haven't read it, please do so before you tackle this one.

Disclaimer: The female is mine. All other characters were borrowed without consent. Batman belongs to DC and the trench-coated version of Death belongs to Matt.

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It takes Batman a fraction of a second to respond. He pivots and jumps away from the moving vehicle. He is a moment too late. Batman is clipped by the speeding truck. The force of the blow sends him flying into the night sky. He lands some 25 yards away, atop a pile of construction debris. A grinning Death approaches Batman's prone form to study his handiwork. The night becomes unusually quiet.

An indentation showing through Batman's mask and cowl, clearly indicate that the left side of his skull has been crushed. Blood trickles from his mouth and nose. His right arm is bent at an unnatural angle. The bloody jagged bone of his broken left thigh protrudes through Batman's skin and tights. But, the item that seems to give Death the most satisfaction, is the splintered 2x4 protruding from Batman's chest. Apparently, the irony amuses him, the Bat staked

like a vampire. He nods at this night's success and backs off.

Batman suddenly rises to a sitting position and rubs the back of his neck. The sensation is strange, or rather the lack of one. He remembers the speeding semi, looks back only to glimpse himself lying on the ground behind him. He stands and turns to face that which was once his flesh and bone. "Too slow," he states softly and shakes his head, "Just too damn slow." He begins to feel a pulling sensation, and turns to see an incredibly bright light. It begins to pulse silver and gold halos in his direction. Batman remains motionless. The light grows tendrils that reach out, yet do not quite touch him. The blue ones send a message of calm. The reds promise warmth and love. He feels the strength of their pull. Though his feet stay planted in the cold earth, his body begins to sway towards the light.

From the corner of his eye, he glimpses a figure. It's not Death, at least, not the one he's met. It appears to be a Gorgon\*. A female as all of them are. She approaches, dragging an apparently wounded left leg behind her. Her gait is slow and cumbersome. As she nears, the pulse and pull of the light grows significantly. Yet Batman, absorbed in examining the approaching creature, doesn't notice the frantic activity.

What hair she has, hangs past her shoulders in long greasy clumps. It almost appears to resemble writhing red snakes. Much of it has been pulled out from the root. The remaining spots are open sores and bloody patches. Her skin is green. Once, it may have been soft and smooth, but now it is scaly and covered in scars, some old and some new. Many are bleeding and oozing bright yellow pus. As she grows closer, he notices the stench. It is incredibly overwhelming. For a moment, he's glad he is dead. Otherwise, he's positive that he would do nothing, save vomit. She comes no closer than the lights. In their shimmering brightness, he notices two other details. The first is her nails. Her fingers are long and strong, capped with these deadly, blood red, razor sharp claws. They are frightening to behold. Perhaps it is the blood that drips from them, or the way they click together as she lumbers forward. It is clear she is fresh from battle. The second thing he notices, are her incredibly large, round, blue eyes. They seem so soft and innocent. They just don't fit. Maybe it's her ridiculously long eyelashes. He's not quite sure what is going on, but the detective in him is alive and curious.

Suddenly, she looks straight into his eyes, winks and smiles. He is amused and horrified at the same time. Her lips are cracked and bleeding. The blood begins to drip down her chin and neck. But it's her teeth, what's left of them, anyway, that are even more ghastly. There are no gums, just a few yellow and blackened stumps attached to the exposed bone. He shudders in response. The Gorgon stretches out her arms, palms up and shrugs, as if to apologize. She tilts back her head to expose her long boil covered neck, and drops to her knees. Arms open and perfectly still, she waits.

Batman steps back and remembers the light. It continues its rapid dance. He looks back and forth between the two and realizes, he must choose. He takes one step towards the light. The Gorgon raises her head, and what he sees, makes him stop cold. A single blood-like tear traces a path down her craggy cheek. Decision made, Batman quickly races toward the Gorgon. She envelops his naked form in her arms. The

lights grow angry and lash out cutting and slicing at the Gorgon's skin. Batman can feel her flinch at each blow, yet she positions her gigantic body, not to fight, but to protect her vulnerable prize. After what seems like hours, the lights end their assault. They fade to resemble two small glowing coals, suspended three feet or so above them in the night air. There they wait, as if to watch what will come next.

The Gorgon gently releases Batman. Slowly and awkwardly, she moves to where his battered and broken body lies. He reluctantly follows. She steps towards the pile of debris and gently picks up the dead knight. She moves him to a clearing of soft green grass and uses her mouth to clean away the blood. "It's too late," Batman states in a soft, harsh whisper. She just shakes her head, reaches out and pulls him to his knees beside her. She takes her hand and runs it along the twisted arm. She folds the arm, places it across his chest and presses the hand around the protruding stake. He shakes his head at her futile efforts. She opens her hand and gestures him to do the same. He complies. She takes his hand and places it over the crushed portion of skull. His eyes close in anguish, only to suddenly spring open wide at the feel of the skull's reforming. She nods and smiles (no teeth this time), and continues with her work.

She mends his thighbone and straightens the leg. All that is left is the stake. She looks at Batman, he nods and together they slowly pull the stake from his chest. Yet, Batman is confused, "I'm still dead." She picks him up to place him atop his no longer wounded body. He lies still for a moment or two, then sits up and states once again, "I'm not breathing. I'm still dead." She lightly presses him back down and with horror he realizes her intent. He attempts to turn away, but she stills his head with her hands, leans forward and kisses him on the mouth. With eyes tightly shut, he is frozen, incapable of movement. Slowly, the kiss softens and he no longer smells the ferocious stench from before. He smells his childhood favorite cinnamon buns, and flowers. All kinds of flowers: wildflowers, tulips, lilacs, and his mother's favorite white roses. Batman can't resist. He opens his eyes. He doesn't see much; she's still kissing him. Her eyes are the same. But her nose, well, it's no longer a huge green wart covered mass. It's short and slightly upturned. Her skin has also changed. It has become a very, very light shade of cinnamon. The smell, that's the smell. It's heavenly, or is it rather earthly?

His mind begins to race. He opens his mouth to speak and her tongue slides in. His chest suddenly heaves as air whooshes into his lungs. Batman breathes. The Gorgon sits back and smiles. This time Batman smiles back at the amazing beautiful woman before him. As if she hears a sound, she turns to look over her shoulder. Batman's eyes follow. The lights that shrank to coals transform themselves into the trench-coated figure of Death. With a wave he beckons the woman. She turns back to Batman and looks into his eyes. Though her mouth never moves, he hears her speak. Softly and sweetly her voice whispers in his head, "He'll eventually be back. Make good use of the time sweet Knight." With a touch to his cheek, he is bid farewell. She steps away to stand with Death, and knowledge dawns. Batman watches as hand-in-hand Life and Death walk away.

He realizes that he must have satisfied Death's desire. And for some reason, he was given a boon. Batman chose to continue his often difficult and painful journey. The peace Death brings will come, but

not today.

**\*\*\_Finis.\_\*\***

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\_\* see Eumenides " ancient earth spirit of life (Greek) \_

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End  
file.